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Couple charged in meth lab case

Child abuse accusations considered in boy's death

July 11, 2007

BY AMBER HUNT

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The parents of Wyatt Young, the toddler found dead Monday in a home suspected of doubling as a methamphetamine lab, face drug charges -- and authorities said child abuse charges could follow.

Tina Boughner, 28, and Andrew Young, 26, were arraigned Tuesday on charges of operating a drug lab in the presence of minors and near a school.

The couple's home on Betley in Sterling Heights abuts Henry Ford High School. Both charges are 20-year felonies, but a previous drug possession conviction against Young means he faces double the sentence if convicted.

Wyatt, who was 20 months old, was found dead by police after his mother called 911 for help, saying her son wasn't breathing.

After finding Wyatt in the home, officers then spotted signs that the couple were cooking meth, Police Chief Dave Vinson said Monday.

The Sterling Heights Fire Department's hazmat team removed the dangerous chemicals used to make the euphoria-inducing drug, including muriatic acid.

Police are investigating whether the boy's death was linked to the meth lab, said Lt. Michael Reese. "We won't know until we have the toxicology results," he said.

On Tuesday, police said they expected to charge the couple with child abuse as well, but Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith said authorities decided to hold off until autopsy results were finished.

"We're determined to get to the bottom of what happened to this poor child," he said.

Daniel Spitz, Macomb County's medical examiner, said Tuesday that he won't be able to say how Wyatt died until lab results return, which will take at least a week.

Wyatt didn't appear to have suffered life-threatening blunt force trauma, Spitz said.

Meth is far from the drug of choice in metro Detroit -- crack and marijuana still dominate, authorities said -- but its production has been creeping into the area.

Cooking meth requires dangerous chemicals. Some are used in farming. Others are available at hardware and grocery stores.

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July 11, 2007

Police probe toddler death

Sterling Heights couple charged with running meth lab out of house where woman's 20-month-old son was found.

Edward L. Cardenas / The Detroit News

STERLING HEIGHTS -- A couple accused of running a methamphetamine lab out of their house may face additional charges once toxicology reports are complete on a toddler who was found dead inside the home.

Andrew Young, 26, and Tina Boughner, 28, were charged Tuesday in 41-A District Court with operating the lab within the presence of a minor as well as operating near a school.

Boughner pleaded in court Tuesday to be released so she could attend her son's funeral.

"I would like to be there for my little boy's burial," she said.

Bond for Young and Boughner was set at \$400,000 each by Magistrate Michael Piatek. He set a preliminary exam for July 23. Young faces a maximum of 40 years in prison if convicted because of a previous drug conviction. Boughner faces a maximum of 20 years if convicted.

Police were initially called to the home on the 42000 block of Betley Drive around noon Monday because Boughner's 20-month-old son, Wyatt, was not breathing. Once police began investigating, they discovered what they believed to be a methamphetamine lab.

An autopsy conducted on Wyatt did not reveal an exact cause of death, and toxicology tests were conducted on the child. There were no signs of traumatic injury, according to Lt. Michael Reese, a spokesman for the Sterling Heights Police Department.

"Our biggest priority is finding out what happened to this child," said Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith. "If the autopsy shows that someone caused the death, we will make that person responsible."

Boughner's 7-year-old daughter, who was not home at the time of the death, is being cared for by her maternal grandparents while the state investigates custody.

Both parents denied operating a methamphetamine lab in the house near Clinton River Road and M-53. A special State Police meth lab unit was rushed to the scene, along with DEA agents, following the discovery in the house.

"I am a pretty simple man, not sophisticated enough to run a lab," Young said during his video arraignment.

He claimed chemicals police say were used to make meth were used instead to clean oil off cement, and that glassware was used for brewing beer.

"They can test it and tell I was brewing beer," he said.

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Parents accused of running meth lab, could also face charges in baby boy's death

Toxicology tests may determine if drugs played role.

By Chad Selweski

Macomb Daily Staff Writer

An autopsy of a 20-month-old Sterling Heights boy proved inconclusive Tuesday after he was found dead at the home of his parents where, according to police, evidence was found of a methamphetamine lab.

The parents were arraigned on drug charges, but police would not speculate on whether the alleged drug-making activities could have contributed to the child's death. Andrew Marc Young, 26, and Tina Marie Boughner, 28, both of Sterling Heights, were charged in 41-A District Court with two 20-year felonies -- operating and maintaining a drug lab in the presence of a minor, and operating a drug lab near a school. The house is located adjacent to Henry Ford II High School.

The boy, whose name was not released, was found dead by paramedics at the couple's Betley Drive home on Monday afternoon. An autopsy conducted by the Macomb County Medical Examiner Daniel Spitz failed to pinpoint the cause of death but further toxicology reports on the toddler's body should produce an answer.

Once those tests are completed in one to two weeks, the couple could face additional charges, according to police Lt. Mike Reese.

"There was everything that constitutes a meth lab," Reese said.

But Young said in court that the materials removed from the home by police consisted only of concentrated vinegar and muriatic acid, used for cleaning concrete. All of the items were locked away, he added.

"I'm a pretty simple man, not sophisticated enough to create a laboratory," he said.

Stickers placed on the windows of the family's small ranch-style house warned that drug-making materials had been removed from the home and lingering residue of hazardous materials could present a health risk.

Neighbors along the tree-lined street expressed dismay about the child's death and the parents facing criminal charges. They said the couple were friendly and seemed to be caring parents for the boy and a 5-year-old daughter. Activities at the house gave no indication of drug trafficking, they said.

"We never saw anything strange. They were just a neighbor. They seemed to be a decent couple," said Donald Scraver, who lives across the street.

Scraver and other neighbors said Young suffered from health problems and joblessness and the couple was anticipating a foreclosure on their home.

Neighbors said the home had no air conditioning and the stifling summer heat could have been a factor in the boy's death. Police responded to the home at about noon Monday after receiving a 911 call about a sick child, and the boy was pronounced dead at the scene.

Bond was set at \$400,000 for both Young and Boughner.

Macomb Daily Staff Writer Gordon Wilczynski contributed to this report.

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Police: Baby Dead In Home With Signs Of Meth Lab

POSTED: 7:41 am EDT July 10, 2007
UPDATED: 7:22 am EDT July 11, 2007

STERLING HEIGHTS, Mich. -- The mother and father of Wyatt Young, an 18-month-old that died Monday night, are being charged under suspicion of operating a methamphetamine lab in their house.

The boy's mother, Tina Bogner, 28, and father, Andrew Young, 27, are also being charged for suspicion of operating methamphetamine lab within 500 feet of a school, a crime punishable of up to 40 years in prison.

The boy's mother called 911 Monday afternoon to report that her son was sick and unresponsive in their Sterling Heights home.

"We found some precursors that indicated they might be making meth," Vinson said.

Police said they discovered the toddler dead as well as items such as muriatic acid, a highly toxic chemical.

"We found some precursors that indicated they might be making meth," Sterling Heights Police Chief Dave Vinson said.

Authorities are performing toxicology tests to figure out what exactly killed Wyatt.

In court, the boy's father denied operating a meth lab out of his home.

"I have never had a laboratory in my life. The muriatic acid I used was to clean the oil off my concrete. All that stuff was locked in a box," said young.

Police and a hazardous materials team investigated the scene Monday night and posted a sign on the door that said, "Do not enter, hazardous chemicals used for illegal drugs inside."

A neighbor who did not want to be identified explained what the mother did right after she found the boy.


"She had the baby in one arm, with a cell phone in the other. She was screaming."

"Right now, the case is under active investigation. We are looking at all possibilities," said Vinson.

Authorities said the couple's 5-year-old daughter is with her grandparents, and a social worker has been assigned to the case.

Tina Bogner has an outstanding traffic violation warrant in Warren and Andrew Young served 30 days in jail for previous drug charges.

The judge has set a \$400,000 bond for both parents.

Watch Local 4's Silva Harapetian uncover the story.  [Baby Dies Inside Of Meth Lab](#)

The baby's mother called 911 after she said she found her baby unresponsive:

911 operator: How old is your baby?

Victim's mother: He's almost 2...oh my God.

911 operator: What was he doing?

Victim's mother: He was sleeping.

911 operator: He was sleeping, you just found him like that?

Victim's mother: I went in there and he was...and I picked him up. What do I do?

911 operator: OK I can give you CPR instructions.

RELATED TO STORY



Video: Police Release 911 Call In Baby's Death 7-10-07



Girl dies hours after abuse charges

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

By Nate Reens

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- After learning his baby sister, Lucretia Teunis, died of head injuries, 5-year-old Seth Stauffer promised his mother he would make things better.

"He keeps saying he's going to get older and bring her back to me," Jennifer Teunis said Tuesday. "He says that she's with God, but I don't know that he knows what's going on, that she's not coming back.

"I don't know how I'm going to tell him so that he understands," said Teunis, 24.

Her 8-month-old daughter died Tuesday night.

Earlier, police charged Teunis' live-in boyfriend, Jeffery Mata, 21, with first-degree child abuse.

Grand Rapids police Detective Paul Warwick this morning said Mata made a statement to police acknowledging the child's injuries would have happened while she was in Mata's care Monday morning.

He declined to identify the nature of the injuries or how they were caused.

Mata was caring for the infant and two other children, ages 3 and 5, Warwick said. He told police he called his girlfriend, the mother of the infant, to report the child was sick. She told him to call 911 and he did, then waited for the ambulance to arrive, Warwick said.

The mother said Mata initially told her he did nothing to cause the girl's injuries, and he thought she was having an asthma attack.

"He treated them like they were his own. It's mind-blowing to me because she knows him as her father, calls him 'Da-Da,'" she said. "There had to be so much force to do this. I can't even imagine."

Lucretia had a feisty personality, Teunis said. The infant had a keen sense of when her mother needed a smile and a kiss.

The girl's organs were to be donated today, Teunis said.

State police records show Mata has no serious criminal history. He pleaded guilty in May to driving without a license and was fined \$90.

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8-month-old dies after severe beating

Updated: July 11, 2007 05:03 AM EDT

GRAND RAPIDS - An 8-month-old baby passed away overnight.

Now a Grand Rapids man could face murder charges.

Jeffrey Michael Mata, 21, is behind bars accused of beating the baby girl.

24 hour news 8 spoke with friends of Mata on Tuesday who say the accusations against their friend are "out of character."

Mata shared an apartment with the baby's mother.

One neighbor told us she saw authorities carry the baby girl out and say she appeared to be blue.

Overnight, the child's mother told 24 Hour News 8 her daughter would be removed from life support.



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Foster Care Program Hurt by Cuts

July 10, 2007 04:26 PM EDT



Without family to depend on, kids who are too old for the foster care system usually have no one to turn to for guidance.

Program official: "These kids don't have parents they're not that fortunate."

A program called the Supervised Independent Living Services, or SILS, provides that support, helping kids on their way to independence.

Program official: "It's critical, helps them find an apartments, apply for college."

The program just found out they are losing \$7,000 in state funding. With less money, official say the program can do less for kids who age out of the foster care system. Most likely services will have to be cut back and less kids will be accepted into the program. Program officials say, without this guidance, the kids are more likely to become homeless or even end up in jail.

Program official: "If you don't provide support, these kids become a burden."

The organization is now turning to the community hoping to raise this money so these kids don't get left behind.



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07/10/2007

Pinecrest hearing Thursday

By [Cheryl Wade](#)
[Midland Daily News](#)

A Thursday public hearing could be a first step to determine how Pinecrest Farms will receive financial support in the future and how Midland County will deal with the rising costs of operating it.

The meeting will be at 7 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners Room at the Midland County Services Building, 220 W. Ellsworth St.

Pinecrest is home to 48 residents who represent a mix of disabilities and difficult

circumstances. About a third are elderly and have dementia, a third are mentally ill

and a third developmentally delayed, said Administrator Mark Royer. Some residents fit into more than one category.

Pinecrest is one of two facilities in Michigan licensed as a county infirmary, but it

also is a licensed adult foster care home. It was built according to 1970s-era standards, with many of the rooms housing four residents and bathrooms down the

hall. Two rooms have private bathrooms and a couple more have half-bathrooms,

toilets and sinks but no showers.

Royer wants Pinecrest renovated and expanded by about a third, with private and

two-person rooms, each with its own barrier-free bathroom. Because doctors sometimes come to Pinecrest instead of having patients come to them, the plan is to

add examining rooms where doctors may meet privately with patients.

According to an architectural and design study, it would cost \$7.89 million to renovate and expand Pinecrest. The county could sell bonds for the work, and repay them with part of a tax increase of as much as 0.37 mill for 20 years. About half the money would repay the bonds and the rest would operate Pinecrest. The tax would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home \$18.50 a year. After the early years of the tax, it probably would drop to lower than the 0.37-mill maximum, Royer said.

"My goal for Pinecrest is for it to be economically self-sufficient and flexible in meeting patient needs," Royer said.

Last year, Pinecrest's budget was \$1.29 million, of which \$598,000 came from the county's general fund. This year's budget is \$1.3 million, with the county contributing \$707,000.

Rising expenses at Pinecrest have concerned county officials for years, said Leona Falkenstein, a member of the Midland County Department of Human Services board. With rising costs throughout county government, commissioners in recent weeks have debated the county's role in operating Pinecrest.

"I'm hoping that the commissioners are willing to put it on the ballot and allow the people to vote and see what the voters of Midland County want," Falkenstein said of the tax question.

As Pinecrest ages, it's become harder and harder to attract private-paying clients, and the facility isn't good for those the state supports, either, Royer said. A person with dementia, schizophrenia and a drug history, for example, might have a hard time coming up with the social skills to live in such tight quarters, he said.

When people ask him why Pinecrest needs a fix worth more than \$7 million, Royer explains how living there costs residents half, perhaps less than half, than the cost of living in a nursing home. That's because Royer isn't required to have a medical director, physical and occupational therapy and other services that require special skills. Residents who need this type of care receive it from the Visiting Nurse Association and other professionals. Royer's nursing staff works around the clock. Royer said he'd like Pinecrest to continue serving the kind of residents it does now, but he'd like to add more hospice patients and people with Alzheimer's disease. The current building isn't secured enough for Alzheimer's patients. With the tax levy, he could afford technology that would allow staff to keep track of residents inside and outside the building with special neck charms or bracelets. In addition, any hall could be closed and locked so residents could be mobile without leaving the facility.



Workers get pay increase

Tuesday, July 10, 2007

Audit:Christ Centered Homes didn't give staff raise in February

By Christina Hildreth

childreth@citpat.com -- 768-4924

Adult foster care worker Judy Logan had been waiting months for her raise.

By June, the Jackson resident was beginning to wonder whether it was ever going to come. "We didn't see any of the increase," Logan said.

Then last week, Logan and 60 other employees at Jackson-based Christ Centered Homes, an adult foster care facility, got checks for raises they were supposed to get in February. In all, the agency delayed paying more than \$7,800.

The employees got their money after LifeWays, a nonprofit human services agency that contracts services through Christ Centered Homes, did an audit and discovered all of the money -- which was approved by the state Legislature -- wasn't paid to employees, said Nancy Miller, chief executive of LifeWays.

After hearing of employees' complaints from the Citizen Patriot, LifeWays investigated.

"We requested evidence, and the report made it clear that it wasn't done properly," Miller said. Instead of giving all employees a 2 percent cost-of-living increase, Christ Centered Homes had given about 20 employees -- mostly managers -- a modest raise, the audit showed. The other \$7,800 remained in a payroll account.

Bishop Ira Combs, chief executive of Christ Centered Homes, said his agency incorrectly assumed only select employees would be eligible and did not realize its mistake until the audit was done.

"They are not the best-paid people in the industry," he said of the employees. "They do deserve any kind of raise they are given."

State lawmakers in February approved a 2 percent cost-of-living increase for all direct-care workers statewide, retroactive to October.

Some Christ Centered Homes employees, mostly managers, received the money months ago.

LifeWays got \$15,828 from the state in January, and sent it to the agency Feb. 8. Miller said she had expected the agency to make the payment in the next pay period.

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Muskegon Chronicle

13-year-old sex suspect to undergo tests

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

By Terry Judd

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A 13-year-old Grand Haven Township boy facing several criminal sexual conduct charges involving an 18-year-old Grand Haven Township woman and two girls he allegedly assaulted last month will undergo testing to see whether he is competent to stand trial.

A Thursday Ottawa County Juvenile Court disposition hearing and preliminary examination was adjourned Tuesday after the court approved a motion for a competency examination for Fathi Cullen, the son of Antonio and Saundra Cullen of 14514 Dogwood. The prosecutor's office did not challenge the motion filed by Cullen's attorney, Leonard Mungo of Detroit.

No new hearing date has been set, according to the county juvenile court. The boy will undergo psychological evaluation to see whether he is competent to understand and face the charges filed against him last month. Last month, Mungo said he would ask the court to authorize a competency exam to see whether his client is capable of going to trial.

Prosecutor Ronald Frantz said the competency examination of Cullen was to begin today, but there is not set timetable when the examinations must be complete. Once a competency examination report is filed, the court has five days to make a ruling as to whether the defendant understands the charges and is competent to be tried.

Charges against Cullen allege he sexually assaulted an 18-year-old Grand Haven Township woman June 2 morning in her home at River Haven Mobile Home Park, as well as 12- and 14-year-old girls later that same day near Hofma Park.

During a June 5 hearing in Ottawa County Juvenile Court, Assistant Prosecutor Jennifer Kuiper said she will seek to have the boy designated as an adult. Such a move, she said, will give the court greater flexibility in sentencing if he is found guilty of the charges. The court will not rule on Kuiper's motion until after the competency hearing.

If Cullen is tried and convicted as an adult, the court has the option of sentencing him as a juvenile, as an adult or imposing a delayed sentence with the option of imposing an adult sentence if there is a probation violation.

Charges against Cullen, in which he potentially could be tried as an adult are:

* Attempted criminal sexual conduct first degree during a felony. This charge alleges Cullen attempted to sexually penetrate the 18-year-old woman after he invaded her home. If sentenced as an adult, he potentially could face a sentence of five years in prison.

* Home invasion first degree. The charge alleges Cullen entered the 18-year-old's home without permission and physically assaulted her while entering and exiting the dwelling. If sentenced as an adult, Cullen potentially could face 20 years in prison and/or a \$5,000 fine.

* Criminal sexual conduct second degree. The charge alleges Cullen engaged in sexual contact with the 18-year-old woman during a home invasion. If sentenced as an adult, he potentially could face 15 years in prison.

* Interfering with electronic communications. The charge alleges Cullen "maliciously prevented, obstructed or delayed" the female victim from using her cell phone to call for help. If sentenced as an adult, Cullen

could face a two-year sentence and/or a \$1,000 fine.

In addition, Cullen faces two charges involving the assault of the two girls at Hofma Park. The prosecutor is seeking to have these charges handled through the juvenile court:

* Criminal sexual conduct fourth degree. The charge alleges Cullen engaged in sexual contact with a girl using force or coercion.

* Indecent exposure. The charge alleges that Cullen exposed himself to a girl at the park.

According to juvenile court records, the Cullens lived in Allendale as recently as 2005. In April, Fathi Cullen pleaded no contest to an October 2005 charge of indecent exposure and no contest to an April 2006 charge of fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct using force or coercion.

In return for his plea, a February 2005 charge of larceny of a phone from school and an April 2006 charge of assault and battery were dismissed. Last year, the boy was convicted of fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct for the April assault at Meijer and ordered to undergo sex offender treatment.

Earlier this year, he violated his probation when he was caught accessing sexual Web sites on school computers and touched a school staff member inappropriately.

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Article published Jul 11, 2007

Family: Brownell confessed

Trace Christenson

The Enquirer

Timothy Brownell confessed to killing two people moments after police say he shot his former wife and her fiance.

"He was ranting and raving and yelling and screaming," his adoptive father testified Tuesday. "'I shot Mary and Larry, and I am going to kill myself.' He repeated it several times."

Donald Brownell said his son called him at 6:48 p.m. Oct. 21, and they talked for 31 minutes.

After admitting to the shootings, Donald Brownell said, his son told him he was driving to Muskegon but then said he was going to Oakridge Cemetery in Marshall to the grave of his adoptive mother and Donald Brownell's wife.

"He wanted to be buried by his mom," Donald Brownell testified. "He said he was killing himself because he didn't want to go to prison. He was out of it as far as I was concerned. No question, he was not in his right mind."

Timothy Brownell, 42, of Ceresco is on trial in Calhoun County Circuit Court for the murder of Mary Brownell, 40, and Larry Allen, 52. They were shot and killed in their Ceresco home on Oct. 21.

Prosecutor John Hallacy told the jury the killings were premeditated, while defense attorney Ken Marks said they were done on impulse after a long dispute with his former wife over custody of their two children and child support.

"This was built out of passion, frustration and anger," Marks said. "Premeditation does not exist."

The jury trial continues today before Judge Allen Garbrecht.

Donald Brownell was one of several family members to testify Tuesday as Hallacy began to present the prosecution case.

Timothy Brownell's stepfather, Ronald Jackson, also talked to him on the phone and testified that Brownell told him: "I killed them. I killed Mary and Larry. I killed them both. I took care of the problem."

Jackson said he only talked to Brownell a few moments before giving the phone to his wife, Connie, Timothy Brownell's birth mother.

"He was very excited," Ronald Jackson said. "I thought he was intoxicated."

Brownell's daughter, Amber Brownell, 13, told the jury her father had called the house three times, speaking to her twice and then to her mother.

"I told him, 'I don't want to talk to you,'" Amber Brownell testified.

The girl testified that she and her father had a strained relationship, saying at one point she hated him and alleging that her father was often drunk and sleeping when she and her younger brother, Tanner, visited.

She said her father spent more time with her brother, and once, on July 4, 2006, he punched her because she complained that the shower was cold.

"He didn't show love to me," she said, and claimed that he once told both children he didn't want to see them.

Other members of the family testified that Timothy Brownell was a good, loving father who spent time with his children and who was angry and hurt because, beginning in August, his former wife refused him visitation.

"Mary was not letting them visit with him," Connie Jackson told Marks. "It was her decision. He was hurt about no visitation."

Amber Brownell told the jury her father seemed drunk when he arrived on Oct. 21. When he got out of his van, she ran inside to warn her mother and Larry Allen.

"He looked like he had been crying," she said. "He had dark eyes and he looked pitiful and sad. His eyes looked like he was pretty drunk."

After running inside, Amber Brownell said she heard the door splinter and then a gunshot. She ran to her bedroom and jumped out the window and heard her mother scream and two more shots as she ran to a neighbor's house for help.

Earlier, Brownell's girlfriend, Barbara Wells, testified they had been watching college football before she went to the grocery store.

She said Brownell had two or three beers, but he was upbeat and laughing and enjoying the football game.

When she returned she found he was gone, but he called about 6:30 p.m. to say he was coming home.

He never did come home, but police came to the house that night and found that his shotgun, usually kept under the bed, was gone.

Later, after the shooting, Marshall police saw Brownell's van and chased it before he pulled into the cemetery, where he shot himself in the chest and arm with a shotgun. He was hospitalized and recovered.

Since that night, family members said, Brownell has told them he doesn't remember anything about the incident.

"He told me, 'Dad, I don't even remember it happening,'" Donald Brownell said.

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